Moments by beansgreens

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Summary:

The moments that Hopper and Joyce fell together then fell apart over the years.

Moments

1963

His glances only serve to remind her of the past, of simpler times in high school, sneaking out of class and smoking packs of cigarettes between the two of them. She's reminded of the days that he was her everything and truth be told, she doesn't think there was ever a time where he wasn't her kind of everything. The time that love wasn't epitomised in the depths of his blue eyes, and the look of his smile when she would put him in his place, or the touch of his sandpaper hands on her waist as he wished her one final goodbye before he left her. She can remember the sound of his voice as he whispered his goodbye to her, his young eyes a reservoir of unshed waterfalls.

'I don't want to leave you—I'm…I'm scared.' He shook his head and dropped his gaze to the floor, his tears streaking down his cheeks, the gravity of the situation dawning on them. They were just kids, but they were so in love, and they wanted everything, and then reality came and tapped them on the shoulder and here they were. He was off to war, and she was stuck here. In a dead end town, with a dead end life in sight and she couldn't choke those feelings down anymore. She remembers grabbing his face in her tiny hands, and willing him to be strong, for her, for their lives, and for him because lord knows she didn't want to know what life in a world without him would be like.

'I can't promise you that you'll be fine. I wish I could, I wish I could go instead of you' she remembers sliding her hands down his shoulders to rest on his chest. 'But babe, I'm gonna be here waiting. I don't care how long you'll be gone, I'm here, and lord knows that I'm not going anywhere. So you come back in one piece, and we'll go. We'll see the world, and have lots of babies and live in a white house on the corner of a small town near a big city and we'll have each other. You hold on to that. You hear me Hop? I love you James, and I need you to come back in one piece.' She willed herself to be strong, to show him that she'll be alright without him, he needed this and

she couldn't stop him. But how she wanted to, how she wanted to grab his arms and beg him not to go, to stay with her where she knew that he'd be safe and sound, and nothing could hurt him.

He looked her, really looked at her and shook his head. He kissed her with everything that he had, every promise he'd ever made and every promise he'd ever broken lived in that kiss. His whole heart was in that kiss, and it stayed there. His heart stayed in between her lips, in her very soul and her being, he needed her to have it. To know that it was hers, that he was completely hers, the good, the bad and the ugly. He loved her so much and he needed her to know that, because if something happened to him, he needed her to know that she was his last thought, she was in his last breath. She cried then, with reckless abandon, her tears too much for him to bear, so he kissed her forehead and walked away. She called out to him and he turned, her brown eyes shining with a promise full of love and complete adoration, he lifted his arm and let out a half hearted wave and lopsided smile and walked off. It was only then that he let the tears he'd been holding in fall out in the masses, one after the other, drowning him in his loss.

1967

His eyes remind her of all the times they fucked up, all the times they spent fighting and leaving each other. All that lost time that they should've spent loving each other with everything that they had. She recalls the moment it went wrong, when she lost him. She walked into his room and closed the door behind her, her bottle green dress and his suit jacket a reminder of the wedding that they should be attending. He was sat at the edge of his bed and was holding his head in his hands , his feet firmly planted to the ground. His hair dripped with water and his shirt was half untucked , his tie askew and his dress pants tucked into one of his socks. She leant up against the door and held onto it.

'I'm sorry' she whispered, surprising herself and him at the words that suddenly came out of her mouth. 'I'm so sorry. I'm—'

He cut her off with a question that broke her heart. His voice was scratchy as if he hadn't spoken for weeks, and it broke as he spoke

the words that had been on his mind for the past two weeks. The pain and heartbreak he felt all poured into the one question. His face remained looking at the ground as he spoke. 'Babe, where did you go?'

She broke out into tears and his front broke. He looked up at her, a storm of unshed tears in his eyes. His cheekbones had become more prominent over the month and his face had become skinnier, he had become skinnier. She walked over to him purposefully and bent down in front of him. 'I'm sorry. I was wrong, I shouldn't have left, I don't know why I did, it seemed like the right thing to do at the time. I didn't mean anything by it. I was upset and I wanted to go. I'm scared to lose you, I was scared that if I made you my home, you'd leave and I don't know what I'd do if that happened. I needed to get away, I needed to be home, away from you, and this, and us, for me to realise that I don't want anyone other than you. It's us, it's always been us, even when you were gone Hop, it was us.'

His face broke as he heard her words 'Is this not your home anymore? Am I not your home anymore? I'm not gonna leave you again, Joyce. Stop trying to push me away, please just stop.' She kicked herself as she looked at the broken man in front of her. She'd broken him and she hadn't even bothered to check on him. She wrapped her hands around his face, one reaching behind his ear into his hair, the other one keeping his eyes on her.

'You will always be my home. I realised that when I left. I wasn't thinking and I'm sorry.' She looked at him, really looked at him and knew that she had to tell him, and she knew that it would break him. It would break them, what they were and she wasn't okay with that but she couldn't lie to him. Not now, not ever. 'Hop, I need to tell you something, and before I do, I just need you to know that you're the only man I'll ever love, the only man I've ever loved.' He cocked his head to the side in confusion before he realises what she's about to tell him, and she first hand witnesses the dimming of the lights in James Hopper and it kills her. He looks at her with a detachment she'd never experienced from him before, and her heart shrinks in her chest, knowing that everything had changed and it was all her fault.

'I slept with Lonnie. You went away, and I didn't know if you were

ever going to come back and he was there and I was drunk and so was he and I…' she ran her hands through her hair and carried on 'I'm not asking you to forgive me Hop, but I needed you to know this. It was eating me up, and I can't breathe, I love you so much and I know I fucked up but I love you and if that's enough, then I promise you I'll spend the rest of my life making it up to you.'

He looked at her for a moment, a charged silence ran between them as both them knew that this was the end, yet neither wanted to voice it. He softened under her touch before removing her hands off him gently and standing up.

'I need you to go.' His voice sounded completely calm and detached yet inside he was screaming, how could she do this? They were supposed to be together forever, such a naive concept looking at it now. Forever. Did people ever really get their forever, or was it just something that the movies and songs sold to us to make us somewhat content with our mundane existences in this shitty world. She turned to him, her arms rejected at her sides, a vision in green, surrounded by an air of blue deep sadness. She wanted to put up a fight, she wanted to shout at him and beg him to see it from her point of view, but she knew it was useless. There was no use, they were over and it was her fault.

'James, please.'

'Joyce, I'm begging you here, please go. I can't, I need time. I just need you to GO' his voice raised before he realised it was happening and he faltered for a second at the pure intensity of betrayal that laced through his voice like a intricate vine, spreading and poisoning them. She nodded dejectedly and left his dad's trailer, not before turning to look at him one more time. The picture of him, his head hung low, with his hair falling in his face, covering the tear tracks running down his smooth cheek, is etched into her memory forever.

Joyce waited outside his house that night, banging on his window, before sliding down the side of his house. She called for him a couple times, knowing that he was in his room, listening to her crying and telling him how much she loved him. She didn't blame him, she fucked up and this one was on her completely, but she'd never hurt like this. A deep ache settled in her bones, and made itself a

permanent resident within her, and she couldn't shake it. She ended up falling asleep against his wall, only waking in the morning from the shouts of the paper boy asking her if she was okay. She let out a small smile and shrugged, walking off in the direction of her house. The last she heard from James Hopper was that he was offered a big cop job in the city, and he took it.

She was informed by a neighbour in passing a few years later, that he'd settled down in New York, that he'd found himself a wife and they were expecting a child together. She remembers the feeling, the crushing disappointment, the extinguishing of the last burning ember that she held for him in her heart. She was happy for him, kind of, he'd gotten out of this dead end town, he'd made something of himself like he'd always wanted, but it stung that he'd done all of that without her. That she no longer factored in his plans, he probably never thought of her. He never said goodbye, he just left, and she waited for weeks, hoping, praying that he'd turn up but he never did. That's when she found out about the job, and his acceptance, and as a result, she accepted Lonnie Byers marriage proposal with a broken heart and a taped together smile.

1979

She pulled him into her house which was a complete mess, that's what having two boys does to a house. She fumbled with the jacket on her back before turning to him and raising an eyebrow. She'd seen him in the bar just near the corner of town and everything she'd ever felt for him, came back to the surface. The shock of seeing him wore off after realising that he was not the same Hopper she'd known when they were young. This Hopper was jaded, all jagged edges, and sharp looks, and an air of isolation hung around him. She didn't know this Hopper, and she felt the need to give him something, breathe some life back in to him because this was not him. She managed to convince him to come back to her place, drunk off his presence.

'What do you say Hop? A little late night rendezvous for old times sake? Make it quick before the boys get back home from Lonnie's.'

She didn't know what brought out this confidence in her, the need to have him right there had been building up for years, buried under mounds of regret and hurt and denial but she's always felt it.

'You'd know all about quickies now, wouldn't you Joy?' He said under his breath, walking away, into the corridor. His buried hurt resurfacing, he was always an open book when he was around her, he couldn't hide how he felt. His filter was lost when he looked at him with her big eyes that once looked at him like he was at the core of her universe. Now they were burning with something, something other than desire.

'Excuse me? What do you mean by that? Come back here, don't walk away. ' she walked into the hallway and pulled him back into the room. She slammed the door behind them as he fell into a chair and spun around to face him. Her anger at him palpable in the air as their silly game begins to play out again. His constant yin to her yang, and not in the peaceful way. The way that only he knows how to do, the way to rile her up, and drive her up the wall.

'What. Do. You. Want?' She poked him 'tell me what you want and I'll do it.'

'I WANT–' he let out a deep breath and groaned 'I wanted YOU to not lie to me. I wanted you to WANT to be with me Joyce' he looked pointedly at her as if to accuse her of all the crimes in the world. Her resolve broke as she pulled on her hair. 'What the hell does he mean by that?' She asks her. This never ending tug and war that played such a big part in their relationship, the tug and war that often ended up driving them off the road. She saw it in high school, she saw it when he came back from Vietnam and now that he's returned back to Hawkins after the loss of his family. Little did he know, she only wanted him, no matter who she was with, it was always him. His stubborn ways, and his angry looks, and his jealousy and overbearing height, it was always him and she hated it.

'Hop' she laughed, a laugh that was not in response to anything funny, a cold chilling laugh that sung of hurt. 'I don't know what to say. Are we really gonna dredge up skeletons from the past. Is that what we're gonna do now? Lonnie was a big part of my life and he always will be but we became something in a retaliation to our mess.

Our mess that is still, all these years later, a MESS. I never loved him, I just knew that I could, if I tried over time, but I'm not gonna explain that to you. It's none of your business.'

'I apologised, hell I stood outside your window back then for the whole night apologising until it became apparent that you clearly weren't bothered.' She slammed her hands on the table 'I'M ALL OUT. I don't have anything left, this is me. I'm the worlds worst person, isn't that right? I'm sorry I'm not perfect, I fuck up all the time. All these years of shit will do that to you, you idiot. But you left me! You went to war, and then you came back and acted like everything was all fun and games and then you fucked off again. Off to start a perfect life in the city with your perfect job and your perfect suburban wife. And you never even said goodbye.'

'I didn't doom us Hopper, that was all you. You are the one that left me with no one, and your sorry's will never change that. You were all I had in this shithole, I planned my fucking life around you and then you left. It is all on you. You left ME, and I needed you' her voice begins to crack and her anger fades to give way to the sadness that she's carried with her all her life 'I needed you so much Hopper and you left and you just didn't come back. I can't take you leaving again, I won't make it this time and I need to make it, for my boys, I need to make it. I need to make it for me. But if you go this time Jim, that's it.'

She sat down, grasping at her hair.

'I can't do this with you. If this isn't what you want, then go. Please just—go.' She looked up at him with her big brown eyes, pleading with him to stay, contradicting her words with her entire physical being. He looked down at her, their height difference exaggerated tenfold, and pulled his hat off in frustration. His heart broke with everything in him, he shouldn't have left her. He should've stayed and loved her and let her know that she was everything in this shitty world. Her flyaway hair, and her eyes, and her clumsy thrown together style and her drawl on certain words. She's his world and he left her and he shoulders that every day.

'I'm sorry.' He bent his head down and pinched his nose. His stubbornness and pride stopping what he needed to say. He picked

his hat up and walked out the door and he knew that he'd single handedly made the biggest mistake of his life. He cursed himself, his ego, his pride, his inability to move past one small act of desperation and despair. He knew that he needed her but life was shitty and he was shitty and he'd probably fuck it up somewhere down the road anyway, so he might as well save them the pain.

1983

'I'm sorry about what I did and how I left you. I'm a shitshow and you know that. You know that, and you still took me on.' He plucked a cigarette from his pocket and placed it in his mouth, not lighting it, but its presence grounds him and reminds him that this woman is his only shot at happiness. 'I don't doubt that you love me, I know you love me, even if you don't want to or you don't want to acknowledge it. After Sarah—' he paused and took a breath 'I was a mess. I needed someone to hate, and I didn't have Diane to hate anymore, I hated the world Joy. I hated everything but most of all I hated you.'

Her face blanches at the bluntness of his admission but he carries on, fighting the urge to turn around and run for the hills 'I hated that you reminded me of all the times when I could've been something. You reminded me of what being happy truly felt like, not the fake happy that you force upon yourself to give your life some kind of meaning. Happiness with you was never forced, you were it for me Joyce. I hated that you reminded me that that was possible. Every time I saw your face, I wanted that happiness again, and I couldn't let myself feel that Joy. I was too scared to feel anything, because if I was to lose you on top of everything, I wouldn't have made it out alive. When I found out you had married Lonnie, I didn't think I'd ever be okay. That was supposed to be us, a big white house, with lots of kids and a dog, and he had everything that I was supposed to have.'

'I'd never hurt like that Joy, I felt like someone had ripped me in half, and then I lost Sarah, and then I lost Diane, and I just couldn't breathe. I couldn't and you were there and you reminded me of everything, I needed to make someone hurt like I'd been hurt. I needed you to know what it felt like when you picked him over me.

And I'm so sorry, I'm sorry, I'm so sorry' Hopper covered his face with his hands and Joyce cursed at herself, and at them and their horrible timing. Just two weeks ago, she'd started seeing a man called Bob Newby, otherwise known to Hopper as 'Bob the Brain' and she wanted to scream at the injustice of it all. Her and Hopper had been doing this dance since they were sixteen and they could never catch a break and now he was stood in front of her, opening up to her about his deepest thoughts which she knew it took a lot of him to do.

'Jim, I can't. I——I can't now. I have my…I have my Bob, and my mess and I can't.' she turned away and got in her car. She saw him in her mirrors as she drove off, hating herself with every mile that passes. It felt like one of them was always leaving, leaving the other in a mess of hurt and loneliness and she wishes that she could stop the cycle of it. But she can't.

1985

She realises that she spaced out, and she's brought back to a reality. A somewhat twenty years later, four children amongst the two of them, one child lost to the blackhole, one child lost and found to the cruel hands of an evil man, and one child fighting hell and back every night that he goes to sleep. But here they are, alive and well as they could be and she breathes a sigh of relief. He's okay, he's here, and he's smiling at her like she hung the stars and moon and his eyes are twinkling and her heart feels like its gonna burst out of her chest and run to him. She lets out a small smile back at him and he runs a hand through his thinning hair, and she feels like laughing in joy, feeling truly happy for the first time since her few moments of euphoria with Bob.

'I think that we should get back together' she blurted out, her eyes wide, her face flushed with first hand embarrassment of her admission. He looked at her, really looked at her, more than he'd looked at her since the break up. His unawareness and her admission caught him off guard, he knew that he still loved her but he didn't know that she felt it back.

‘Wait–what?’ His response embodied his confusion at the situation . She grinned at him and laughed. She really laughed, happier than she thought she’d ever be. She knew him and she knew what his response meant. He opened his mouth to speak as she did. They began speaking over each other.

'No come on–’
'What do you mean come on’
'Emotions are running high and —’

‘James, can you just shut up for one minute and let me talk.’ She looked at him, in the way she did that had that effect on him. The way where he’s drop everything to hear what she had to say. He stopped short at the use of his official name, she hadn’t called him James since they were kids, stupid kids with the whole world at their finger tips. A difference from the adults that stood in the place of those wide-eyed teenagers, adults who had shouldered pain and misery that would stay with them for their whole lives. But they were adults that made their way back from all of that hurt and despair, to these simple moments of standing on the porch with their children safe and sound inside playing like the kids they were once. And such moments were appreciated greatly.

'Look, we are not the most clean cut, well put together, perfectly happy couple but we are us. We are us, we’re ridiculously imperfect and messy, but come on, can we just give this up’ she gestured between them 'can we really just let all this, all of our past, go, I know I can’t and I’m stood here looking like a fool, hoping that you can’t. If you can, this will be really awkward and I’ll feel really embarrassed and stupid and I’m rambling and I’m gonna stop now.’ She tugged at the loose strand of hair that had escaped her messy bun, and blushed bright red.

She’d said too much and she didn’t know why, but he kept looking at her. Like really looking at her, and he hadn’t looked at her like that for nearly twenty years, and she realised that he was the only person she needed, not Bob, and definitely not Lonnie. It had always been Hopper, it had always been him, he was the only man who had ever truly seen her for her and loved her despite that.

She took a deep breath and raised her eyes at him, expecting a smart reply, but he just stood there, jaw slack, eyes wide open and his hand in his hair. 'You can talk now' she looked at him, prompting a response 'you can really talk now'

He took two steps towards her and closed the gap. His hands grazed her face and her eyes slipped shut at the brief contact. 'Woman, shut up and let me kiss you.'

Author's Note:

Hiiiiii,
This is my first Jopper fic, I posted it on Tumblr about a month ago but only just got this account now. Hope you enjoyed it, I'm hoping to write more of these two since I love them so much. Please leave comments on what you thought and if you liked/ hated it.

Please go easy on me people, I will get better!

My Tumblr is @oohcheckme so if you have any prompts then send them there. Thank youuuu.